26.—THE GOVERNMENT OF THE WORLD.

I. "Thy providence, O Father, governeth it" (Wisd. xiv. 3). God is not only Creator, He is also Guide and Ruler. The action of governing and directing all things is complementary to the action of creating them. It is necessitated manifestly by God's perfection, by His love for all that He has made, and His continual interest in it. The arrangement and order of the universe show clear evidence of God's continual guidance. Every creature, every molecule and atom, has its use and function; it serves God, and tends towards Him according to its nature and capacity; every creature moves forward towards the end and purpose of its being, and that, in the last analysis, is God. Material things do not, like intellectual beings, approach to the possession and enjoyment of God; but they represent His perfections, make Him known to those who can understand Him, and bring them nearer to Him. God has knowledge of every one of the innumerable particles in the universe, and manages and rules it for the general good. This is the greatest happiness and consolation to the faithful soul. You are not abandoned to yourself, nor left to be the sport of accident and chance; "for in His hands are all the ends of the earth" (Ps. xciv. 4). Never forget this, or think that you are forgotten. Say always: "The Lord ruleth me. I shall want for nothing" (Ps. xxii. 1).

II. Associated with government is the preservation of all things according to their kind. This requires a continual influx of the same energy which originally brought things out of nothingness; without it they would cease to exist, and would return whence they came. God's influence is as necessary for existence as the sun is necessary for the maintenance of heat and motion on this earth. In a civil State, as it is better ordered and more firmly established,

so does the machinery for coercion obtrude itself the less upon our notice. So the evidence of God's continual action is not to be found in terrifying exhibitions of enormous power, but in the quiet order which preserves the great mechanism of the universe in its countless details. Consider how elaborate and multifold is the machinery of earth, air and water, of seasons and temperature, of chemical and mechanical forces. Consider how delicate is our bodily adjustment in blood, and brain, and nerves, and lungs, and digestion; how little it would take to derange all this—a few degrees of temperature, a particle of injurious matter, an instantaneous suspension of some minute operation within us. What a perfect and wonderful balance is maintained! And all this is as nothing compared to the care for the preservation and guidance of your supernatural life. Thank God for all this.

III. God's governance of all things culminates in His eternal glorification by the souls of men. Our existence has a double object and term; the one nearest to ourselves is our own happiness in salvation, the final and chief one is the external glorification of God by us. The whole of this world and all the work of creation circles round this object and gravitates towards it. This is the explanation of the mystery of the universe. The success of our personal part in this great work depends on ourselves, aided by God's grace; we may fail by our own fault to accomplish our destiny. But in any case, our life and our fate render glory to God. Either in heaven or in hell we shall eternally witness to God's love, justice, holiness, and wisdom, to the advantages of serving Him, the excellence of His law, the easiness of salvation, the absolute necessity of God to our perfection and happiness. You cannot escape from the all-powerful hand of God. Willingly or unwillingly you must conduce to His glory; all you can do is to choose whether you will serve Him to your own infinite advantage or to your eternal detriment.